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Chairman: Mr. Al Bayati ..... (Iraq)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 61: Advancement of women (*continued*)

(a) Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/C.3/61/L.11)

Draft resolution A/C.3/61/L.11: Trafficking in women and girls

1. **Ms. Banzon-Abalos** (Philippines) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and also Afghanistan, Angola, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chile, Ecuador, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Monaco, Morocco, Nigeria, Panama, Senegal, Swaziland, Thailand and Togo. She said that of the estimated one million persons trafficked in the world, a staggering majority were women and girls, most of whom were trafficked for the sex industry. An important manifestation of the international community's commitment to combat human trafficking was the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. However, that Protocol failed to espouse a real gender perspective that went beyond the mere inclusion of the phrase "especially women and children".

2. The current draft resolution sought to fill that gap. In the light of the Beijing Platform for Action and the recent High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, the international community could not afford to diminish the strategic importance of a gender approach to the global fight against trafficking in persons. The draft resolution would emphasize, inter alia, the need for a solid human rights foundation for anti-trafficking efforts, the need to address the factors underlying trafficking, the demand side of the problem, the importance of gender- and child-sensitive data collection, the responsible and non-discriminatory use of information technology and the need to address trafficking which occurred during emergency situations.

Agenda item 67: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of human rights instruments (*continued*) (A/C.3/61/L.15)

Draft resolution A/C.3/61/L.15: Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

3. **Mr. Rehfeld** (Denmark) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Cyprus, Iceland, Liberia, Lithuania, Monaco, Morocco, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, the United States of America and Uruguay. He said that in paragraph 26 the words "noting the upcoming entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention" should be deleted.

4. The draft resolution recalled that freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment was a non-derogable right that must be protected under all circumstances. It condemned all forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and underlined that such acts would remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever. Furthermore, it emphasized the obligations of States to act in accordance with the principle of non-refoulement. The draft resolution focused on the important work done by the Committee against Torture and the Special Rapporteur on torture as well as the persistent efforts by non-governmental organizations to combat torture. It also acknowledged the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

Agenda item 67: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/61/306)

5. **Mr. Ziegler** (Special Rapporteur on the right to food), introducing his interim report (A/61/306), said that, despite the promises to eradicate hunger made at the 1996 World Food Summit and in the Millennium Development Goals, global hunger continued to rise. More than 850 million people suffered from hunger and every day in 2005, 24,000 persons had died of hunger. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), there was potentially enough food to feed twice the world's

current population. Therefore, the deaths of persons from hunger were tantamount to wilful killing.

6. There had been some positive developments with respect to the right to food, however, including the tax introduced by France and supported by 15 other States on airline tickets to fund efforts to combat HIV/AIDS as well as hunger. That initiative had yielded excellent results. Brazil had succeeded in the previous four years in reversing undernourishment, thanks to national measures to provide food assistance, increase school enrolment and improve infrastructure. In Guatemala, too, clear progress in combating malnutrition had also been made including a decline in infant mortality owing to undernourishment, thanks to such measures as food security legislation. India, too, had made tremendous strides in ensuring the right to food through its public food-distribution system and other means.

7. Yet there were also situations of serious concern with respect to the fulfilment of the right to food, including in the Horn of Africa and the countries of the Sahel.

8. In Lebanon, which he had visited following the recent war between Hizbollah and Israel, the agricultural and fishing sector had been greatly affected and essential infrastructure destroyed, with a long-term impact on livelihoods and access to food and water. He also drew attention to the existence of more than 1 million anti-personnel mines left by Israeli forces, and the Israeli Government's refusal to provide maps of the mines in order to permit demining of farmlands.

9. In Darfur, the security situation remained volatile: more than 2 million people had been displaced and an estimated 500,000 people had died of hunger since 2003. The Human Rights Council was paralysed with respect to that situation. He hoped that his request to visit the region would be granted by the Sudanese Government. Because of the security situation, the World Food Programme (WFP) was unable to reach some 320,000 persons in need. The security of humanitarian convoys must be ensured to enable food assistance to reach them.

10. Thousands of Africans in search of income to feed their villages continued to seek refuge in Europe, often risking their lives; some of them had fled areas threatened by soil erosion and destruction of the ecosystem. Indeed, half of the 850 million people he had cited earlier lived in drylands in the process of destruction. Despite commemoration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, financial resources to remedy the situation were lacking. As a result, environmental refugees had flooded into the urban slums of South Asia and Africa.

11. Concerning international trade, he drew attention to the Doha trade negotiations within the World Trade Organization (WTO), which should have resulted in the elimination of export subsidies provided by industrialized countries to their farmers. The Doha Round, however, had been a complete failure. Export subsidies given by the countries of the European Union, the United States, Canada and others continued, which meant that fruits and vegetables from industrialized countries cost one half of the price of local produce in Africa, for example. Millions of African and Latin American peasant farmers had no markets to sell their crops and could not earn enough to feed their families. Such a situation constituted a serious violation of the right to food. Dumping policies were destroying African agriculture and causing hunger and undernourishment. States had a transnational responsibility under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to abandon such policies. Respect for the right to food was the sole solution for overcoming the scourge of hunger.

12. **Mr. Makanga** (Gabon) said that the interim report of the Special Rapporteur (A/61/306) had provided an interesting overview of hunger throughout the world. He stressed that hunger was only one facet of poverty and that poverty eradication could not be effectively tackled unless hunger was also addressed. In the light of important French and Brazilian initiatives, he asked what could be done at the global level to ensure that all countries took effective measures to ensure the provision of food to their inhabitants.

13. **Mr. Afifi** (Egypt) said it was no secret that man was born free but was everywhere in chains. His delegation would like to hear the Special Rapporteur's views on the implementation of the right to food in the occupied Palestinian territories, and his ideas on what needed to be done.

14. **Ms. Moreira** (Ecuador) commended the Special Rapporteur for raising several topics linking transnational responsibility to the right to food. She asked what impact the developing countries' external debt had on the exercise of that right. Her delegation also agreed

with the need for the General Assembly to adopt forthwith the Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the Human Rights Council in June, in the light of the Special Rapporteur's statement in his report (A/61/306, para. 43) that the Declaration went beyond International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries and that even if it was not a treaty, it was a new tool for indigenous claims to rights, including the right to food.

15. **Mr. Pato** (Togo) said the international community displayed a degree of cynicism and hypocrisy regarding the paradox of widespread malnutrition in some countries and gross overindulgence in others. Violation of the right to food was a human rights violation, but less widely condemned than the more dramatic variety. Since the problem, discussed in the Third Committee year after year, appeared to become increasingly complicated, could the Special Rapporteur suggest some way of resolving that dichotomy?

16. **Mr. Kim** Yong Ho (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said the report of the Special Rapporteur (A/61/306, para. 22) did not accurately reflect the actual situation and new developments in his country. While the Government did not claim to have fully solved the food problem, it was ensuring food security, with the help of the international community, which, he would have thought would commend his country's reliance on its own capacity rather than on outside assistance. Strangely, the Special Rapporteur had made no mention of the root cause of obstacles to enjoyment of the right to food, one of which was the economic and financial embargo imposed on his country.

17. The Special Rapporteur would be well advised to base his conclusions and recommendations on a fair and balanced analysis of the challenges, instead of which he had limited his comments to the failure of the Government to solve the food problem, although it had improved food security through equal distribution of food to the entire population. Under General Assembly resolution 60/165, each country had primary responsibility for the implementation of national right-to-food programmes and strategies; therefore, blind criticism of Government policy was tantamount to interference in the internal affairs of a State. Rather than sincerely wishing to help realize the population's right to food, the Special Rapporteur had sided with hostile forces endeavouring to isolate the country and its people.

18. **Mr. Alakhder** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that, since food depended largely on clean water, sanitation and unpolluted air, he hoped the situation would not deteriorate to such an extent that it became necessary to appoint a special rapporteur on the right to air. He asked if any tangible progress had been achieved and what concrete measures the international community had taken within the framework of the United Nations, especially with regard to food delivery to the victims of recent natural disasters.

19. **Mr. Salih** (Sudan) claimed that many of the statistics cited in the Special Rapporteur's report (A/61/306, para. 19) in connection with the Sudan were false. The Sudanese authorities were committed to protecting food security and had provided assistance to 200,000 people in the area. Although the Special Rapporteur claimed not to know why the conflict was continuing and that he would not express political opinions, his delegation was anxious to hear what action he would recommend for dealing with the militia's rejection of the Darfur Peace Agreement which his Government had signed in good faith. It was the rebel factions, not the Government, which prevented food from reaching those in need of it.

20. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for Palestine) said that in his 2004 report (A/59/385) the Special Rapporteur had painted a dismal picture of the food situation in the Gaza Strip under Israeli occupation, a situation that had worsened immeasurably, with food insecurity among the Palestinian people skyrocketing at an alarming rate, owing to the Israeli occupying forces' encaging of Gaza. She asked how the international community, and the United Nations in particular, could prevent further exacerbation of the situation and how the well-being of the civilian population under occupation, particularly their right to food, could be protected.

21. **Mr. Bhakta** (India) expressed his delegation's satisfaction at the visit of the Special Rapporteur to India in 2005, where he had witnessed its efforts to ensure respect for human rights, including the right to food, and at his comments on ways of improving the exercise of that right in the context of the right to development. In addition to the Indian Supreme Court's recognition of the justiciability of the right to food, the Government had also put the National Rural Guarantee Programme into operation. He would like the Special Rapporteur to say what impact he thought the failure of the WTO Doha Round was having on the

realization of the right to food in most developing countries.

22. **Ms. Maierá** (Brazil), noting the growing number of people suffering from hunger throughout the world, reaffirmed her country's commitment to protecting the right to food and thanked the Special Rapporteur for his positive remarks regarding its efforts to combat hunger and poverty and promote development. She agreed that hunger was mainly a problem of food distribution rather than food production and was linked to the inequalities of agriculture and international trade.

23. As the representative of India had said, the collapse of the Doha Round had postponed the enjoyment of the right to food in the developing countries. What mechanism could be created to call the attention of international public opinion to the matter and how could it be used to influence the policies of developed countries? Since to attack hunger alone could yield only palliative results, what type of structure could tackle all hunger-related ills in a comprehensive, integrated manner and so make food provision sustainable?

24. **Mr. Nawal** (Lebanon) thanked the Special Rapporteur for his honest version of the tragedy inflicted by Israel on Lebanese civilians and said he was welcome to visit Lebanon whenever it was convenient. In addition to its banana plantations and farmlands, Israel had also bombed Lebanon's grain silos, as well as its oil reserves, sparking an international ecological crisis that had severely damaged the local economy, especially for fishermen. Had the Special Rapporteur's investigations shown that the Israeli bombings had been intentional and systematic?

25. **Ms. Thomas Ramírez** (Cuba) noted that millions of lives were lost each year not because of lack of food production, but because the social exclusion and political marginalization of certain groups resulted in unequal access to food. Since promotion of the right to food was a matter of national and international responsibility, she would like to know what new actions could be taken to strengthen the fulfilment of that responsibility, and what international action could be taken to support rural development and small-scale agriculture in developing countries, especially in the light of the failure of the Doha Round.

26. **Ms. Leikas** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said it was interested in the Ethiopian experience of small-scale water-harvesting for rehabilitation of arid lands (A/61/306, para. 32) and would like the Special Rapporteur to elaborate on that experience and on other key elements for improving the right to food in arid regions. In view of Guatemala's 2005 National Law on Food Security, which, inter alia, recommended strengthening the Office of the Ombudsman to monitor the protection and realization of the right to food, how did the Special Rapporteur envisage such a contribution from such offices and from national human rights organizations? She also wished to know what action the international community could take to stop discrimination with regard to food — for instance, among indigenous women and women suffering from HIV/AIDS.

27. **Ms. Diallo** (Mali) said that the Special Rapporteur had addressed in his report nearly all the factors that made her country vulnerable — such as subsidies and climatic factors — with the notable exception of the locust invasions that were depleting its resources. In a country whose economy was 80 per cent agriculture-based, plagues of locusts, coupled with the lack of rainfall for many years, were placing enormous strains on the country's economy and merited a mention in the report.

28. **Mr. Zamani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) asked whether the Special Rapporteur thought that a special framework for the implementation of his role would achieve better results and overcome the challenges mentioned in his report.

29. **Ms. Baroudi** (Morocco), calling attention to the link between desertification, soil degradation and food in Africa, on the one hand, and long-criticized traditional agricultural practices on the other, pointed out that the modern agricultural techniques imposed had not always been successful. She wondered whether the Special Rapporteur could elaborate on that problem and suggest a way out of the impasse.

30. **Ms. Abdelhak** (Algeria) asked whether the Special Rapporteur had thought of compiling his experiences derived from the new developments taking place in Brazil, Guatemala and India regarding hunger and malnutrition so that they could serve as models for other countries (A/61/306, sect. II). Given the Special Rapporteur's statement that ecological rights should be respected both within and outside national borders, she wondered whether, in the light of transnational responsibility for the depletion of ecosystems by

overexploitation of natural resources, particularly by Western countries, a regular review of the right to food by the Human Rights Council might not provide the ideal opportunity for noting violations of such rights and taking appropriate action.

31. **Mr. Israeli** (Israel) said his delegation was dismayed at several aspects of the Special Rapporteur's report to the Human Rights Council on his recent mission to Lebanon (A/HRC/2/8) and felt compelled to call attention to his calculated decision to omit facts that did not support his own agenda. For instance, the report did not mention Hizbollah's massive rocket attack into Israel, part of the aggression that had initiated the recent conflict. That omission was particularly glaring in section II, entitled "General context", and spoke volumes for the Special Rapporteur's agenda and alleged impartiality. The report clearly legitimized Hizbollah terrorists by characterizing them as the armed forces of the Lebanese political party, in direct contradiction of Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006), in which Hizbollah had been requested to disarm and the Government of Lebanon to extend its control to all of its territory.

32. His delegation also noted the deliberate misrepresentation of the situation regarding humanitarian access in Lebanon during the conflict. The Special Rapporteur had not acknowledged the establishment of the special office set up in Israel to act as a focal point for humanitarian coordination between the relevant Israeli authorities and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the International Committee of the Red Cross. According to OCHA, 80 per cent of all humanitarian convoys had been coordinated, with Israeli approval. United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners had delivered significant humanitarian aid to conflict-affected areas. Even as he spoke, the World Food Programme was pulling out of Lebanon because, in its own words, "the emergency is over". The Special Rapporteur had regrettably chosen to disregard those facts, as well as various United Nations assessments.

33. He had similarly ignored the ample evidence of Hizbollah's cynical use of human shields, which had deliberately endangered civilians. Instead, he had freely condemned Israel for civilian casualties, even though Hizbollah terrorists had deliberately hidden among civilians and launched their attack from within their ranks. It was disturbing that the report had made no reference to the responsibility of the Government of Lebanon for acts of hostility prepared and perpetrated within its territory. The report also claimed that Israel had the obligation to compensate Lebanese victims, but completely ignored the obligation of the Lebanese Government to make compensation for losses and suffering caused during a conflict that Israel had neither sought nor initiated.

34. **Mr. Chernikov** (Russian Federation) asked whether the Special Rapporteur had experienced any difficulties in his interactions with other actors, including international organizations, and whether there were any special procedures for international cooperation in areas such as the right to food, the right to development and the right to health. In that regard, he asked whether and how Member States could assist the Special Rapporteur in carrying out his mandate.

35. **Mr. Zhang** Yishan (China) said that, although the international community had proposed many initiatives concerning the long-standing issue of the right to food, including the Millennium Development Goals, it remained a contentious matter. He wondered what the Special Rapporteur saw as the largest structural issue in solving that problem and, with the growing gap between developed and developing countries, whether he deemed the right-to-food situation in the developing countries to have improved or worsened. Since the right to food was closely linked to absolute poverty, which was a grave human rights violation per se, he asked whether there was any coordination or cooperation between the Special Rapporteur and other mechanisms with a view to finding a solution.

36. **Mr. Tin** (Myanmar), while expressing great appreciation for the report of the Special Rapporteur, said his delegation was surprised that, given his wisdom and long experience, he had carelessly or deliberately described the right to food in Myanmar as precarious. Nothing could be further from the truth. His was an agricultural country, where almost half of gross domestic product and 18 per cent of exports were agriculture-based. Myanmar was food-sufficient and also exported large quantities of rice, beans, fish and fishery products.

37. FAO had called attention in March 2006 to the mere 5 per cent level of undernourishment, as opposed to 12 per cent for South-East Asia and 16 per cent for Asia and the Pacific. It had also pointed out that both the proportion and absolute numbers of undernourished

persons had fallen since the World Food Summit benchmark period of 1990-1992 and that the food supply had greatly improved since the early 1990s. Those FAO statistics gave the lie to the politically motivated allegations that Myanmar was headed towards widespread malnutrition.

38. He suspected that the Special Rapporteur had been seduced by allegations emanating from certain quarters wishing to spread false rumours that were tantamount to interference in the internal affairs of a Member State. He had obviously not consulted the FAO statistics; his delegation therefore requested that the unfounded remarks concerning Myanmar should be deleted from the report.

39. **Mr. Ziegler** (Special Rapporteur on the right to food) apologized for the fact that, owing to time constraints, he would be able to give only a brief response to each of the points raised.

40. Human rights issues were not receiving sufficient attention, and had not yet won the place in the global collective consciousness that they deserved. Some States rejected the existence of the right to food or indeed all social, economic and cultural rights. Some refused to accept certain human rights laws on the grounds that the world market would ultimately resolve extreme poverty, destitution and the destruction of populations by epidemics; that market forces alone could solve the world's problems; and that any intervention or wilful policy would simply sabotage those market forces and prove ineffective.

41. The same argument held that, if liberalization of the circulation of all capital, goods and services was total and optimal, involving all sectors, maximum profits would be reaped, ultimately benefiting all. However, such arguments were based on flawed assumptions, and contradicted the facts: while on the one hand the sweeping success of capitalism had created tremendous wealth, it had also created widespread misery, exclusion and gaping inequalities — particularly in the southern hemisphere — by concentrating that wealth in the hands of a tiny number of oligarchic leaders of the capitalist system and large international companies which controlled almost all the planet's resources.

42. Among Member States, there was a rift between those that recognized social, economic and cultural rights and those that recognized only political and civil rights as human rights. However, political and civil rights could not be separated from other human rights. Indeed, as the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 stated, all human rights were universal, indivisible and interdependent. Democracy itself hinged on the right to food. Normative action was needed, together with a decision by the Third Committee, the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly as to the kind of intervention that was needed to guarantee rights, including the right to health, schooling and housing.

43. The situation regarding the right to food in Palestine was tragic: many children were undernourished, many families had only one regular meal a day, which in itself was often insufficient, and the majority lived on foreign aid, since they were unable to produce or buy their own food. Israel's military actions and presence were to blame for the humanitarian tragedy that had unfolded, and clearly violated the right to food. The attacks on and destruction of civilian infrastructure, particularly in Gaza, were clearly war crimes under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War, to which Israel was party, and the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, which had become customary law and must therefore be respected even by non-signatories. In accordance with its international obligations, Israel must also provide compensation to Palestinians for damage resulting from the construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and for damage in Lebanon and Palestine, including seizure of land and water resources.

44. He added that he greatly admired civil society organizations operating in Israel for their efforts in campaigning for an end to the occupation and colonization of territories occupied since 1967 and in promoting human rights law, specifically the right to food.

45. Foreign debt must be eliminated or at least significantly reduced in order to enable countries in debt to make capital available for investment, particularly in social infrastructure and agriculture, and there were many financial mechanisms whereby that could be achieved, depending on the specific situations of individual countries.

46. He welcomed the agreement of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to continue to receive humanitarian aid from WFP, and called upon the Government to respond to his request to visit that country.

47. In response to the comments made by the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, he said that privatization was not a solution if the public sector was functioning efficiently. The view that privatization yielded maximum profit was erroneous. It was vital to protect basic services, such as transportation and access to drinking water, by ensuring that they remained in the public sector and thus subject to public law, in order to prevent the exclusion of the poor.

48. Concerning the Sudan, he said that, while he recognized the progress achieved and welcomed the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement, which reflected the good faith of the Sudanese Government, the continuing humanitarian tragedy was entirely unacceptable. In that regard, he expressed the hope that the problem of security of international humanitarian aid would soon be resolved and that peace would be achieved through negotiations.

49. During his visit to India, he had been particularly impressed with the Government's public distribution system, which ensured the right to food as a constitutional right, which was enforced by law, with cases of compensation ordered for persons displaced by hydraulic construction projects, for example.

50. As to whether the WTO Doha Round would resume, that was not clear, but it was evident that behind-the-scenes negotiations had taken place between the European Union (EU) and the United States, the EU and the Cairns Group, and others. The Director-General of WTO had refused to discuss the issue of the right to food with him, and WTO had refused to recognize the existence of social, cultural and economic rights and embraced the same neoliberal, dogmatic position as that of the United States on that matter.

51. Lebanon was right to bring up its fisheries problem that arose from the Israeli bombings of its fuel tanks, as the attacks had destroyed the coastal ecosystem and hence the livelihood of many families.

52. As to the Lebanese civilians killed and wounded in the recent attacks by Israel, he could only say that Human Rights Watch, a reliable source, had determined, on the basis of interviews with Israeli artillery officials, that the events had constituted a deliberate destruction of civilian life and infrastructure rather than "collateral damage".

53. He welcomed Cuba's respect for the right to food not only on its own territory, but in other countries, for example through the 600 doctors it had sent to staff the feeding centres in the poorest regions of Guatemala through the Fome Zero programme, launched by Brazil.

54. He agreed with the representative of Finland that the rainfed harvesting method should be generalized and promoted. He had observed the effectiveness of that method in Ethiopia and northern Brazil, where tanks collected enough rain water during the rainy season to cover the drinking, washing and some of the irrigation needs of a large family for one year.

55. In response to the comments from the representative of Mali, he agreed that the international community, and FAO in particular, should make more efforts to address the locust problem, which was costly since it required the deployment of special aircraft to destroy the insects while they were still airborne.

56. In Africa, the growing trend of desertification, brought up by the representative of Morocco, had forced some 25 million people to flee their land and villages, leaving them with no rights as refugees, since they did not fall under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. With other Special Rapporteurs, he was seeking to forge the concept of "ecological refugees" to see what human rights were at their disposal in order to help them react to that very painful situation.

57. Turning to the statement by the representative of Algeria, he said that transnational corporations were non-State actors which refused to submit to international human rights standards through monitoring by the international community, especially by the Special Rapporteurs and the Human Rights Council. For example, Nestle, which was much more powerful than many Governments in the world, argued that it was for the State to impose compliance with those standards.

58. In response to the criticism from the representative of Israel, he clarified that he considered Hizbollah to be an "armed branch of the Lebanese political party". Its terrorist nature or its disarmament

was up to the Lebanese Government and parliament to decide, not the Special Rapporteur. He had indeed met with two legitimate, democratically elected officials of Hizbollah, as they were key figures in the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Hydraulic and Electric Resources whom he had needed to consult in order to carry out his mandate.

59. With regard to the matter of safe passage, it was true that a line had been left open in Tel Aviv, enabling WFP to deploy food aid convoys. However, safe conduct had been denied on numerous occasions, specifically for the 22,000 people in 38 localities in southern Lebanon, who had been completely cut off. The ban on the movement of all vehicles in that region had prevented ambulances from assisting those in need, leaving many people in a dire situation. It was the Government of Israel he criticized for its serious violation of the right to food in its war with Lebanon; Israeli civil society organizations, on the other hand, had been very active in protesting the military order issued in August. That order set a bad example for other countries by giving them military reasons to justify non-respect for the right of food. Such practices should be condemned, as the transport of humanitarian aid needed to be ensured, and the work of organizations such as WFP was crucial to saving lives.

60. On the comments of the representative of the Russian Federation, he said that, while some Governments, organizations, and non-State actors did not accept a normative approach to the right to food, others, such as WFP and FAO, did.

61. He praised the Government of China for having successfully achieved food independence, especially in the light of the country's size, through its investment in agriculture and food control measures. He also welcomed China's rejection of the neoliberal approach of WTO.

62. In response to the question from the representative of Myanmar, he pointed out it was Oxfam and Action contre la faim that had stated that food security in Myanmar was precarious.

63. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon) endorsed the conclusions of the Special Rapporteur and thanked him for his honest and objective reporting and the highly satisfactory responses he had given to points raised by delegations.

64. Given the universality of the right to food, it was difficult to understand why Israel had deliberately targeted humanitarian aid convoys and impeded access to the victims of its attacks on Lebanon during the summer of 2006. The fact that the Lebanese people continued to suffer as a result of the consequences of Israeli actions made such violations all the more reprehensible.

65. **Ms. Mariam** (Ethiopia) said that the measures taken by the Ethiopian Government under the food security programme, including investment in land and infrastructure, had resulted in significant progress in reducing the reliance of the peasant population on food assistance. However, while the Government remained committed to ensuring food security throughout the country under its food security programme, the failure on the part of some donor countries to fulfil their commitments continued to hinder those efforts.

66. **Ms. Ajamay** (Norway), referring to efforts to mainstream human rights within the United Nations system, noted with satisfaction that the Special Rapporteur had established close cooperation with such agencies as WFP and FAO. In that regard, it would be useful to know whether the Special Rapporteur had established similar contact with other relevant agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, close cooperation with which was also important in view of the need for investment in longer-term development strategies in order to fulfil the right to food globally. The Special Rapporteur should therefore provide updated information on the implementation of FAO's Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

67. **Mr. Tin** (Myanmar), recalling that the Special Rapporteur had cited information provided by NGOs regarding the food situation in Myanmar, said that NGOs were not always independent, and indeed were sometimes biased, since they relied on funding from Western donors. Given the importance of accuracy, the Special Rapporteur should use information provided by United Nations agencies only.

68. **Mr. Afifi** (Egypt) said that without the right to food there could be no right to life, nor, consequently, to political, civil or any other rights. He asked the Special Rapporteur how it might be possible to mainstream the right to food and the universal exercise

of that right, since recognition of a right alone was insufficient to ensure that it was exercised.

69. **Mr. Ziegler** (Special Rapporteur on the right to food), replying to questions, said that the information he had received from the Lebanese Government during his visit had been very reliable and free from politicization. While in Lebanon, he had met with Government officials as well as the relevant civil servants in the field, including those working in the fisheries who had provided first-hand information on the coastal devastation caused by the Israeli invasion.

70. In response to the question raised by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, he said that climate change and desertification, which were at the core of his report, were increasing. Droughts currently occurred every two to three years as compared to every 8 to 12 years a decade earlier. The establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund at the initiative of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator was an important step towards ensuring a swifter response to humanitarian emergencies, including climate-related disasters. It was important for States to support that Fund.

71. With respect to the concerns raised by Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa faced drought, and it was estimated that more than 15 million people were at risk of hunger. He noted that the Ethiopian Government did not accept private ownership of land, which was a sound policy. Until 1974, private land had been a feudal monopoly. The ensuing dictatorship had nationalized the land in Marxist fashion. The new Government of Ethiopia had decided against reprivatization of the land, because the situation of extreme poverty in the country made it likely for a peasant family to sell its land to Somali, Yemeni or other traders for a very low price when faced with a severe crisis.

72. As to his contacts with specialized agencies to mainstream the right to food, particularly UNDP and the World Bank, UNDP was the first such agency to incorporate into its strategies respect for social, economic, cultural, political and civil rights. Any UNDP programme must ensure respect for the human rights of its beneficiaries. The World Bank was entirely different. It provided its loans grants on purely banking criteria.

73. Concerning the issue raised by Egypt, there was indeed a problem of matching words and deeds as well as ensuring control of transnational corporations by their home States. The first problem — the lack of coherence, or what he called schizophrenia — required urgent attention. The Swiss representatives accredited to the specialized agencies and to WTO tended not to communicate with one another. They were appointed by different ministries and reported to different parliamentary committees. Furthermore, although States such as France, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States and others were parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights and observers or members of the Human Rights Council, their trade strategies did not take into account human rights.

74. The position of the United States, unlike many European States, was at least coherent. It considered that the right to food did not exist and that the market would resolve the problem of hunger. The United States voted in accordance with a market ideology. It had a coherent strategy for combating hunger and provided many funds to WFP.

75. There was also a need for coherence with respect to transnationals. Germany, for example, should ensure that Siemens respected all the human rights of its employees anywhere in the world; Switzerland should ensure compliance with human rights law by Nestle, Hoffmann-La Roche, Novartis and other manufacturers. The Swiss and United Kingdom Governments had an obligation to establish mechanisms to monitor the activities of Swiss and British companies, respectively, in countries such as Ethiopia to avoid the kind of devastation caused to the coffee industry by Nestle and Unilever.

76. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to continue its general discussion of sub-items 67 (b) and (c).

77. **Ms. Rehman** (Pakistan) welcomed the creation of the Human Rights Council, which she hoped would be able to overcome the problems of the selective targeting of developing countries, the lopsided focus on civil and political rights, the lack of respect for religious and cultural diversity, the imbalance between the promotion and protection aspects, and the working of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights driven by donor priorities.

78. Her delegation was concerned about the marked absence of views, in reports by relevant Special Rapporteurs, on the rising trend of Islamophobia,

whereas views involving anti-Semitism were restricted, and rightly so. That imbalance cast doubts on the objectivity with which religious intolerance was being addressed.

79. Another concern was the fact that Special Rapporteurs such as the one on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions had raised questions of sensitive theological jurisprudence on given religions which were completely unsolicited and beyond the purview of their mandates.

80. Furthermore, the criteria on which countries were selected for country visits had not been discussed, whereas it seemed that developing countries were frequently selected for invitation. The Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions should give more consideration to situations of foreign occupation where instances of State terrorism at the hands of occupying forces and indiscriminate killings were too often ignored. The latter Special Rapporteur should also look into the extraterritorial nature of those killings in situations of foreign occupation.

81. The right to development was crucial to meeting the challenges of poverty, global inequalities, discrimination, armed conflict, violence and the culture of impunity, and was a bridge between economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights. She welcomed the fact that the recommendations of the Working Group on the Right to Development — on drawing up a set of criteria for the periodic evaluation of global partnerships — had been endorsed by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 2006/4.

82. Regarding the need to implement the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, the twenty-fifth anniversary of which would take place on 25 November 2006, she noted that the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief had pointed out in her interim report (A/61/340) that some media stigmatized certain religious communities, whereas article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights prohibited any form of incitement to religious hatred.

83. She also agreed with the Special Rapporteur that legislation which imposed dress codes on religious grounds was a clear violation of the right to freedom of religion or belief and the Declaration, and fully endorsed the recommendation to develop a common global strategy to deal with rising religious intolerance, with a view to drawing up a universally binding instrument to combat religious intolerance.

84. **Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein), focusing his remarks on the work of the Human Rights Council and on the relationship between the Council and the Third Committee, said the Council's accomplishments to date had not lived up to the expectations of most Member States, although it might be too early to pass judgement. Support for the Council had been grounded in the belief that the mandate contained in General Assembly resolution 60/251 offered a real opportunity for a human rights discourse fundamentally different from that which had characterized the Commission on Human Rights. However, the Council's composition had turned out to be an essential element of the unsatisfactory results witnessed since June, with dialogue either not taking place or taking place only between like-minded groups and countries and failing to bridge differences of opinion. Discussions should traverse regions and interest groups and aim at tangible results.

85. His delegation had long advocated a very clear division of work between the Council and the Third Committee. Since the Council was still in its infancy, his country believed that the Committee should refrain from any decisions that would have an impact on already difficult decisions taken by the Council at its second session. In particular, it should be understood that resolutions drafted in the Committee must not affect the review of special procedures, which the Council was mandated to complete in 2007. The General Assembly should not terminate any of those mandates or create new ones. Rather, the General Assembly should take up the recommendations submitted to it by the Council, especially regarding the important instruments dealing with the rights of indigenous peoples and with enforced disappearances.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.